

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 4, 2020

Chairperson J. Hilt called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Hilt, K. George, L. Wood, T. Emory, K. Panozzo, S. Radtke

MEMBERS ABSENT: Riegler, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Zappacosta for 316 W. Webster

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 3, 2019, was made by K. Panozzo, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2020-01 – 316 W. Webster Avenue (Sign). Applicant: Hackley Public Library. District: National Register. Current Function: Institutional. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to replace an aging sign currently located in the garden by installing a new, 36” wide by 36” tall aluminum panel ground sign supported by wood posts. The garden is in the library yard facing Third Street. A rendering of the proposed new sign was provided.

J. Hilt asked if the size was the same size as the current one. J. Pesch stated that the new sign would be a little taller. K. Panozzo asked it if would have a white background, as shown in the rendering provided. J. Zappacosta stated that it would, and it would match the sign recently approved at the Torrent House.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a new, 36” wide by 36” tall aluminum panel ground sign supported by wood posts in the garden facing Third Street as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by S. Radtke, supported by K. Panozzo and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, L. Wood, T. Emory, K. Panozzo, and S. Radtke voting aye.

Case 2020-02 – 416 W. Webster Avenue (Window). Applicant: Home Depot USA, Inc. (Robert Lusby, Property Owner). District: National Register. Current Function: Residential. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to remove and replace one 53”x77” wood picture window on the front façade with a new, vinyl-wrapped wood picture window of a similar size and configuration. A photo showing the view of house from W. Webster Ave. with picture window visible to the right of the front door was provided. This case was heard at a prior

meeting when several other windows in the house were replaced, but the request to replace the front picture window with a solid pane of glass had been denied.

J. Pesch stated that the homeowner had been able to find a new window that more closely matched the configuration of the current window. Drawings of the new window were provided. S. Radtke asked what was wrong with the current window. J. Pesch stated that it was dry-rotted and non-functional. He also stated that the proposed replacement window was about as close as what one would be able to find nowadays. This house was originally located near Hackley Hospital but was moved to its current location in 1994 when Hackley Hospital expanded their campus.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove and replace one 53"x77" wood picture window on the front façade with a new, vinyl-wrapped wood picture window of a similar size and configuration as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by L. Wood, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, L. Wood, T. Emory, K. Panozzo, and S. Radtke voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

New Board Member – New City Commissioner, Teresa Emory, has been appointed to the Historic District Commission, replacing Debra Warren. Kimi George and Steven Radtke were reappointed to the HDC. J. Hilt stated that she would be resigning from the board after many years of service. J. Pesch stated that S. Radtke would fit the requirement of having a member of a preservation society on the board.

HDC Enforcement – A number of recent cases, unfortunately dealing with both unapproved and denied work, have led to a review of Historic District Commission's procedures for enforcement on such work. Staff continues to evaluate this process and provided a brief update at the December 2019 meeting. J. Pesch discussed some past infractions and provided a sample denial letter showing what that would entail. When an infraction was discovered, the board needed to set a timeline for completion of any remediation work. He also explained the civil infraction and appeal process.

K. George arrived at 4:17 PM.

Public Art – The HDC local standards do not address public art, although an assortment of public art pieces have been installed in Muskegon's historic districts in recent years. Staff and board members discussed whether the HDC should be involved in approval of public art. J. Hilt stated that, if the artwork was attached to a building, the HDC should be consulted. S. Radtke added that, if art was painted on a building, the HDC should also have input. He discussed how some other municipalities have dealt with art. J. Pesch stated that he would look into it.

Certified Local Government (CLG) – Staff is continuing with the application to become certified through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Alan Higgins, the CLG Coordinator for SHPO, would be attending the upcoming, March 3rd HDC meeting to discuss the program. Staff asks that board members review the certification manual in preparation for that meeting, and come prepared with any questions. The City of Muskegon’s plan to apply for certification was the impetus for updating the HDC’s local standards in 2019. The CLG certification manual is available online.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

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